

#### *4.4.2 Early Industrial Bayfront Development (1880s-1930s)*

In the late 1880s and early 1900s, commercial and industrial development in the plan area was generally focused along the railroad right-of-way with neighborhood businesses serving the residential communities. However, in 1911, the City was awarded the tidelands from state control. After obtaining control of the tidelands the City initiated the construction of a pierhead line around the bay and the dredging of bay sediments to fill in the former tidelands behind the pierhead to create new useable land. The combination of a pierhead line and dredging of the bay provided additional opportunities for transportation, created new commercial land, and enticed bay-related development. While residential and neighborhood related businesses continued to expand in the plan area during the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the development of the waterfront for commercial and industrial uses exploded in the period between 1880 and 1930.

##### **Pre-1910**

The bayfront within the Barrio Logan plan area provided an ideal location for industrial development due to its proximity to downtown San Diego and its railway connections. An 1889 map of the shoreline shows all of the land to the west of Harbor Drive as railroad depot grounds (Map of the Water Front of San Diego on San Diego Bay 1889). H.P. Whitney built a wharf at the base of 28<sup>th</sup> Street in the late 1880s (Whitney's Wharf or the 28<sup>th</sup> Street Pier) (Tabler 1978). The San Diego Land and Town Company had a large wharf that could berth several ships in the late 1880s, which extended into the bay from the bases of Sampson and Sicard Streets.

By the turn of the century, several industrial companies had been established along the Barrio Logan bayfront. The Benson Lumber Company operated along the bay between Cesar Chavez and Sigsbee. Nearby, Dobler's Brewery (later San Diego Brewery), San Diego's first locally brewed beer, and the associated Brewery Hotel operated at the foot of 32<sup>nd</sup> Street (now within the bounds of the Naval Training Base). The Standard Oil Company also established a location in the plan area at this time. Other industrial business located on the plan area bayside in 1906 included Campbell Brothers Machine Shop and the California Iron Works (Tabler 1978).

The bayfront associated with the plan area benefited from three key developments in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1907, near the foot of 28th Street the San Diego and Arizona Railway broke ground for their line to Imperial Valley. The new rail line was not completed for twelve years, but it served as an impetus to continued industrial growth (Tabler 1978). Second, in 1908, landscape architect John Nolen designed a plan for the City in which he called for the "development of commercial facilities, wharves, docks, and piers South of E Street, extending farther and farther as business demands" (Nolen 1908). Though Nolen's plan was not adopted, the City followed his plan closely for industry along the bayfront east of downtown. Third, the City acquired use of the bayfront land from the state in 1911 and subsequently constructed the pierhead that transformed the useless tidelands along the bayfront to prime commercial property.

##### **Post 1910**

The commercial fishing industry had a significant presence in the plan area following the construction of the pierhead. The growth of the fishing industry in the early 1900s attracted Japanese immigrants. Many Japanese had migrated to San Diego between 1885 and 1887 to work on the railroads. Some who stayed

eventually became successful businessmen and farmers over the following twenty years and some were involved in small-scale commercial fishing (Estes 1982). The wealth of experience and knowledge about fishing and canneries represented by the Japanese immigrants was applied to the demand for fish products. Japanese involvement in the San Diego's abalone fishing industry began in earnest around 1908 when San Diego resident Kikuchi Jioichi began to catch abalone off the coast of Baja with his small crew (Estes 1978). The same year, Kondo Masaharu, who had trained at the Imperial Fisheries Institute in Tokyo in fisheries and oceanography, traveled from Japan to Mexico to invest in Baja's abalone industry (Estes 1977). Japanese fishermen began to arrive in large numbers to San Diego during the 1910s to work on the Baja abalone crews (Estes 1978).

The abalone industry grew until 1918, at which time it was estimated that fifty percent of San Diego's fishing crews were Japanese. Most of the crews were based out of Logan Heights. The fishermen would work during the season from March until November and would return to San Diego to live in the fishery warehouses or stay in Baja during the rest of the year. Housing for Japanese workers was located on present-day Cesar Chavez Boulevard and on the wharfs of the Lower California Fisheries Co. Tuna and the International Packing Corporation (1921 Sanborn Map, **Figure 11**). Many of the wives of the Japanese fishermen, most of whom were also first-generation immigrants, worked in the canneries and drying operations (Estes 1978).

In addition to the expanding abalone industry, San Diego experienced a tuna and sardine fishing boom after 1910. Initially, this commercial fishing industry was developed by Japanese fishermen who caught tuna off of Baja California, where the fish was dried and subsequently shipped to warehouses in San Diego and exported to Asia (Estes 1977). Once canning technology advanced to the point of commercial use, the fishing community adapted to this process and product was returned to San Diego for canning and export (**Plate 6**). By 1919, ten canneries were operating in San Diego, most of which were situated in the reclaimed tidelands area within the plan area. Japanese immigrants primarily operated the tuna fleets and canneries (Tabler 1978).

Beginning in 1919 a series of anti-Japanese bills were introduced to the California legislature that had a negative affect on Japanese involvement in the fishing industry. The legislation called for citizenship qualification in order for a person to receive a commercial fishing license. Citizenship for the Japanese was not possible at the time because the United States immigration law stated that Japanese were not eligible for naturalization. All the legislation introduced to reduce Japanese fishing interests failed until 1933, when the legislature amended Section 990 of the State Fish and Game Code to require all non-citizen applicants for a commercial fishing license prove they have resided in the United States for a year prior to the application. The amendment also required all those involved in the fishing business to hold a commercial fishing license. Because so many of the fishing fleets spent significant time out of the United States, fishing and living along Baja during the season, many Japanese were immediately disqualified. The amendment was appealed in 1935 though it severely handicapped the involvement of the Japanese in the tuna fishery because of the continued attempts to control foreign fishing companies.

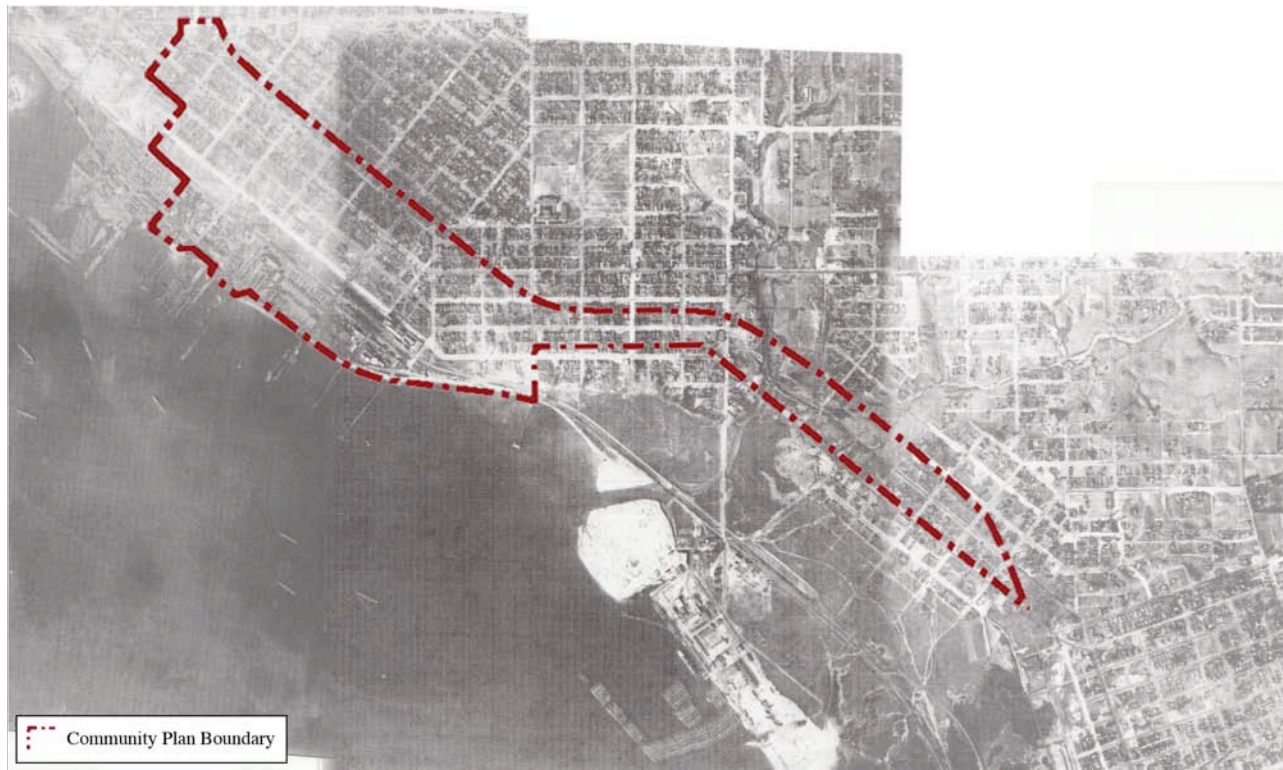
**Figure 11. The 1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map illustrating the fish cannery wharfs on the Barrio Logan bayfront. The cannery wharfs stretched from approximately Beardsley to Dewey. Many activities took place on the wharfs from unloading and storage to packing and shipping. They even contained residences. The housing for the Japanese employees, who represented a large part of the tuna fishery workers, is highlighted.**



**Plate 6. Normandie Sea Food drying and frying, no date. Courtesy of SDHS (#20259-11).**

In 1926, John Nolen published his second city plan for San Diego: *A Comprehensive Plan for San Diego, California*. Nolen recommended that the bay area of Logan Heights (in and around the plan area) be developed as the future industrial and commercial outlet of San Diego, with “railroad belt line facilities and connections to adequate piers for shipping” (Nolen 1926). Nolen also recommended recreational facilities, and he set aside Whitney’s 28<sup>th</sup> Street pier for recreation such as swimming and boating. Harbor Drive was to be a wide avenue lined with trees and landscaped. Nolen’s 1926 plan was officially adopted by the city though the recreation and “beauty” elements of the plan were not completed in the plan area over the subsequent decades. In the period between the adoption of the Nolen Plan and the 1960s, most waterfront development in the city was directed to Barrio Logan’s bayfront as Nolen had planned.

Along with the fishing industry, beginning in the 1920s, prominent businesses along the bay in the plan area included the Benson Lumber Company (west of Harbor Drive roughly between South 16<sup>th</sup> and Beardsley Streets) (**Plates 7 and 8**). Benson Lumber Company maintained a sawmill, planing mill, and lumberyards, as well as its own company wharf to catch the lumber that had been cut in northern California and then floated down the California coast. Southeast of the Benson Lumber Company was the Standard Oil Works, with its large fuel tanks, machinery shops, and oil loading dock, the Bolivar Packing Company (corner of Harbor and Beardsley), as well as the Chas. R. McCormick Lumber Company (between Cesar Chavez and Sampson) with its planing mill, sash and door factory, and lumber yards, and the San Diego Marine Construction Company (on a wharf at the end of Sampson). To the northwest of Benson Lumber Company, fish canneries and wharfs were located on the bayside of Harbor, between Beardsley and Dewey. In 1921, fishing businesses operated from this location, including West Coast Crab & Lobster Company, Southern Reduction Company, Lower California Fisheries Company Tuna Cannery, the International Packing Corporation Fish Canneries, the Sun Harbor Packing Corporation, and the Normandy Sea Food Company. Tucked in between the canneries was the Southwest Onyx and Marble Company. The Standard Oil Company of California was located on the bay between Sicard and Schley (**Figure 12**).



**Plate 7. Aerial Photograph of plan area, 1928. In 1928, the bayfront was an active place, with many wharfs and industries. The Navy Destroyer Base is visible in the center bottom of the photograph (now the Naval Station San Diego). San Diego was the Navy's home base for the Pacific Fleet.**



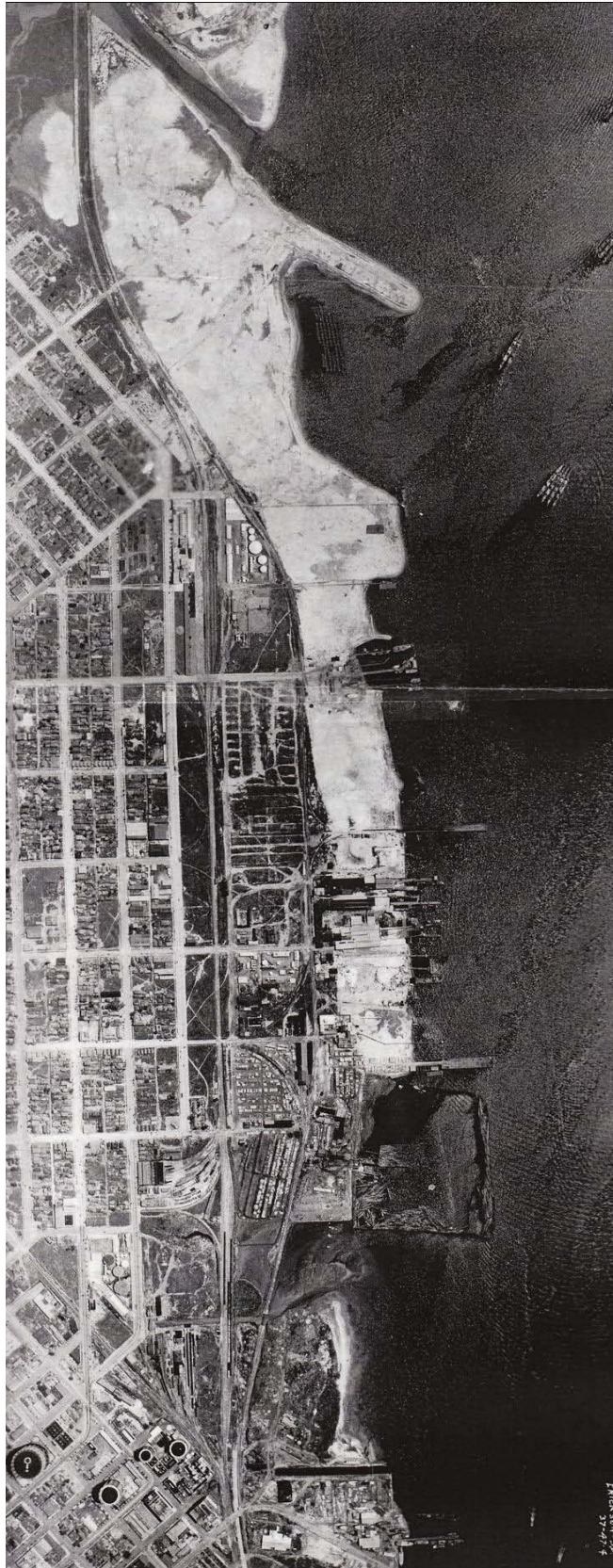


Plate 8. Aerial photograph of plan area bayfront, Mar. 28, 1937. The Benson Lumber Company wharf and the square-shaped restraint to its left were for holding the lumber that was floated down from the lumber camps in the northwest (left center). The fish cannery wharfs are visible near the center of the photograph. The light colored land along the bay is reclaimed tideland. *Courtesy of SDHS.*



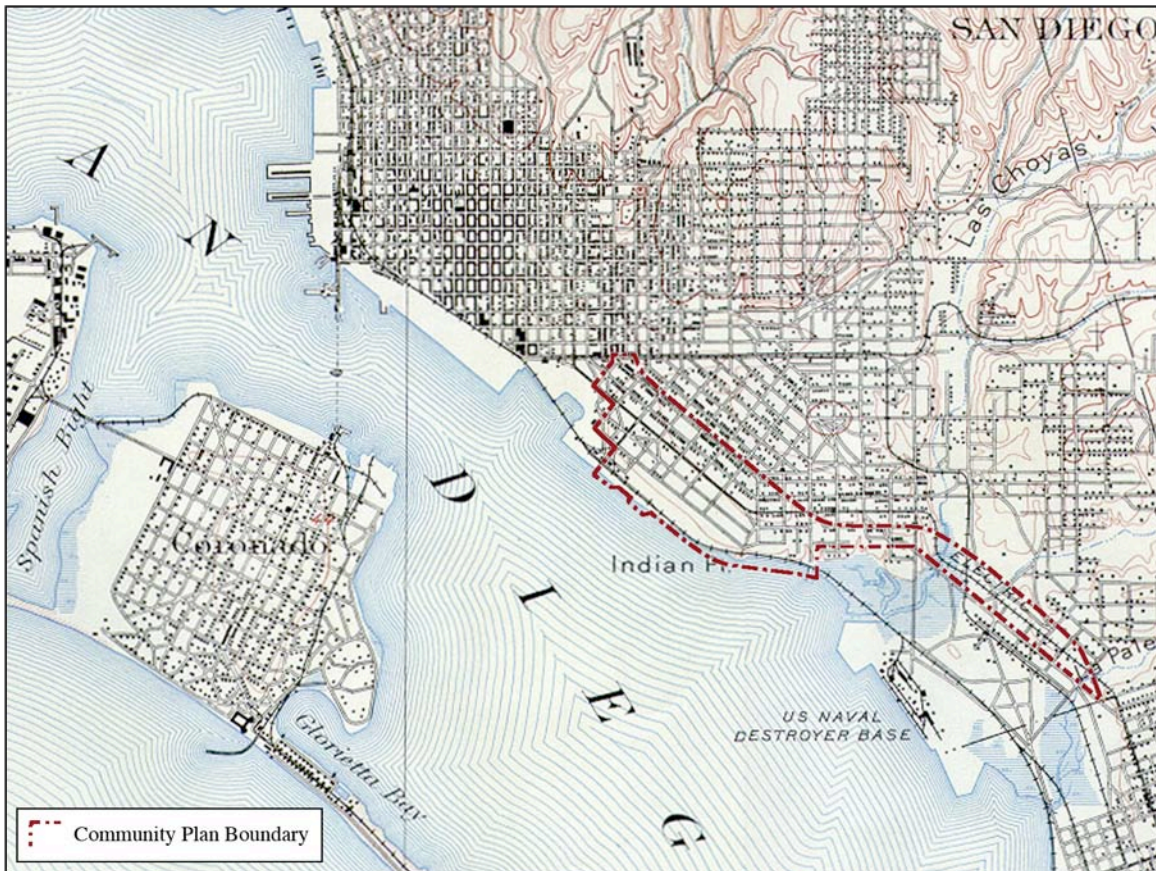


Figure 12. USGS San Diego Quadrangle, 1930.

Note the density of development near the Chollas Creek drainage (undeveloped in the 1902 USGS map) and the concentration of buildings on the northern end of the bayfront representing the lumberyards, canneries, and other bayfront industries.